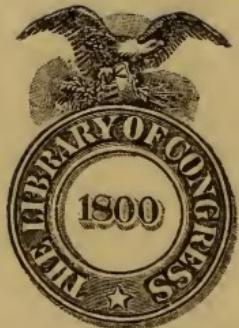


In The Beauty
of the
Lilies



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In the Beauty of the Lilies

SOME BRIEF ESSAYS

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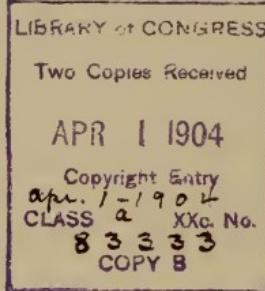
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"Author of "The Great Optimist"



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TO MY WIFE

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In the Beauty of the Lilies



"Resurgam"

NO flower that blooms but sings of life immortal. From where the timid violet lifts its faint sweet song to where the pure tall lilies waft heavenward their incensed hymns of praise, the chorus that bespeaks eternity encircles life that is, and gilds it with the divine glow of Life that is to be. "They toil not, neither do they spin." Their little day is swiftly spent, and yet they bear to men's hearts the greatest message of the God on high. This morn beneath cerulean skies there comes a burst of bloom, all veined and broidered in some skill more

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vast than aught we know. A second sun shall see the petals droop, as if weary, and with the evening shadows a flower is dead. It was so small a thing—one out of countless millions. It shall be little missed and soon forgot. But spite of this, it is not dead! Some other sun shall rise upon the fragrant beauty born of this sweet dying. Some flowers of even fairer hue shall make to bloom the memory of this little life. In loveliness more rare the flower that was shall be again, and through the years, down to the very meeting-place of end and endlessness, one flower shall gladden all the garden.

Wherefore, if He who is Justice thus wills that not a flower shall come to death, save as to the gateway of a new life, think you not He has for us, to whom is given

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dominion over all the flowers of the field, some gift at least as great? In the clear uplifted eye of the daisy, in the steadfast smile of the buttercup, in the warm caress of the rose, in the beauty of the lilies, we have His undying pledge. Whatever may be felt or thought within, whatever may come to our eyes or ears from without, we turn to the flowers and their great brothers, the trees, and in all the varying of their fair fresh voices we hear one strain, that comes to our souls like the soft borne echoes of a vesper bell across the meadow lands at dusk—*Resurgam.*

I shall rise again!

It is the strain telling out to all mankind the one day that has changed the whole course of human existence. Three and thirty years are gone since the angels

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sang in joy at His birth. Three and thirty years He has lived as man and loved as God. Many a dark and trying hour has cast its shadow therein. At last He stands on Friday, the accursed of men—the men He healed and comforted and did good unto. With His last breath He forgives them and commends Himself to your God and mine—for we are all of the same great clan. And He gives His life that He may add to our lives the limitless estates of Immortality.

Down through the years between that dawning of eternity and our own day, an army unnumbered has marched to the measures of human needs. On its myriad shoulders have rested the burdens of the ages. On its ocean of faces have been reflected all the sorrow and all the strength

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of the human heart—rich in both. And a host of its legions have been helped to forget the roughness of the road, through the remembrance of that changing of death into life. For there comes into our years no trial, no sorrow, no loss, no hungering which cannot be seen aright and somewhat understood in the white light of Easter.

Life has its Gethsemanes, wherein worn spirits pray and wrestle with lack of strength, and faltering faith and dwindling hope. Life has its trials before the Pilates of a thousand wrong ideas and customs. Life has its bleeding roads to Calvary, and life has its Calvarys. But through all the darkness the finger of Hope still points a way, and the light of Faith still makes it clear, and when the

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end seems to have come, and the burden to have grown beyond us—then life has its Easters! For the road to Calvary is the path to peace.

It is not an easy lesson to learn, albeit no lesson is so constantly set before us in such endless variety of example. It seems the supreme mission of nature to teach this. None who has ever given thought to a flower, or loved and tended a vine or tree, can justly doubt that the preaching of the woods, the fields and the hill-sides is resurrection.

'Across the quiet fields, where lately swayed the blossoms in the summer wind, we walk in winter and amid a dull stretch of lifeless brown. The skeletons of trees stand like sentinels, guarding some Encampment of Death. The song of birds

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is no more, the merry chattering of the stream is chilled into silence. One night the sky-mother leans down and silently spreads a great white sheet over all. So far as the eye can see, the end has come with this lowering of the grave-cloth.

But one morning the sun returns in some semblance to his former glory. A bird strays in from the South. A limp and decaying leaf is lifted, that a pink arbutus may smile at the blue sky above. There is a strange gladness in all the air. The world is awaking!

This is the Easter of nature, coming year after year to testify the truth of the Easter of man. This is the great help God gives us to understand the sublimest of mysteries. It was the forerunner of the morning of eternal life, which is now

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become the ceaseless echo of that high holy day. And as it is with the things of nature, so is it with what concerns man in this prelude to immortality, and in the beauty of the lilies we perceive immortality and sing with joy,

"Resurgam!"

Life's Friendship

ONE question constantly given utterance, both in thought and word, is: What should be man's attitude toward life; in what spirit should he accept the events of youth and maturity and old age, and as what sort of visitors receive the years that are his? There is but one answer, and though not the one always given, it is surely the wisest and truest of all possible. Man should hold life his friend.

However little he had to do with coming into this world, and however little his choice was consulted as to his primary surroundings, he finds as the years roll on that, if he is willing to use as best he can all they give him, these years are not un-

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kind—are even friendly and even love. The lisping child, who laughs with delight at the breaking of the sunlight through the clouds, who claps its little hands in joy over the beauty of a flower, who is lost in wonder at the softly falling snow, is an exemplar of the attitude which each of us should take toward life and what it brings. The years of childhood are naturally the years without care, but if maturity brings new responsibilites and burdens, it likewise opens the way to a broader and deeper understanding of the mysteries of man and nature, thus strengthening the bond which binds man to the God of nature. The joys of childhood, however blithe, fade away as shadows in the light of the joys of later years, and as the disappointments of childhood

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are balanced by its happiness, so the greater disappointments of maturer years are only in keeping with the larger happiness they bring. The one principle which is most evident in all of life, from beginning to end, is compensation, and if as a foe it takes from us some things we feel should not have been taken, it seldom fails as a friend to give us more than we had a right even to expect.

To look upon life as a friend may perhaps be the solution of much that burdens you and distresses. Your human friend is, after all, frail and faulty as other men and women, and one failure on his or her part might open to your eyes a greater share of shortcomings than you had yet known. Your human friend, however, has blinded you to these lacks by some

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keen sympathy that touches your heart deeply, and lets your eyes see more clearly the better side. Despite this, there are times when your friend disappoints you; when you look for certain aid and find it not; when you feel that friend stands thus and so, and learn differently. It is a shallow friendship that shall be extinguished by these gusts. And so it is a shallow relation toward life that allows the sorrows and pain and disappointments which are inevitable, to overshadow the privileges and blessings bestowed by each succeeding year. Human as we are, we must not expect from life a treatment which will appeal to us as other than faulty in some measure. Only one perfect could find no flaw in all that is, and none of us being perfect, none should expect to find flaw-

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less these times and circumstances which surround us, and which in very truth are largely of our own making.

This is the great reason. While life and we should be friends, it would seem unfair to our very selves to thus desert one for whose cares we are so largely responsible. It is only in the beginning that we have to take life as it is, and then fortunately there are those whose chief joy seems to be the tempering of the wind toward us. When in the course of years the bugle sounds the call of battle, and shoulder to shoulder with the multitude we face the sterner problems of existence, we are armed with minds grown strong, hearts deepened and more full of feeling; spirits fortified by faith, and hands endowed with skill. And thus as times grow

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more complex and new issues present themselves for our working out, we become the better able to solve them. Life is never anything but a friend, yet life, like every friend, shall be faithful to us only so long as we are faithful to it.

Fra Ugo Bassi

THERE dwelt in Rome some few decades ago a servant of the Lord named Ugo Bassi—Fra Ugo Bassi, brother of an holy order—who abounded in high thoughts and good works, and who, when not occupied with his special duties, went on Sundays to some of the hospitals and preached to the sick. He was a man of deep feeling and fine sensibilities, whose love for liberty and its spread was second only to his faith in God and his desire to help his fellow men. Through that desire he became in time the good angel of the afflicted in Rome, and one was counted fortunate whose cot was in the corridor where Ugo Bassi preached. It chanced that one one Sun-

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day, when his great voice rang out a clear message of hope to the sick, an American woman heard him and made note of what he said, and later put it nobly and sweetly into verse, as it comes to us to this very day—a tiny book, whose merit and beauty is in no wise comparable with its size. It is rife with words of comfort for those who suffer and it beams throughout with a soothing light which many a time, I know, has made pain easier to bear and suffering less troublous to the heart and body. One portion of it runs thus:

“ Measure thy life by loss instead of gain ;
* * * * *

But when the sharp strokes flesh and heart run through,
For thee and not another ; only known
In all the universe, through sense of thine
Not caught by eye or ear, nor felt by touch,
Nor apprehended by the spirit’s sight,
But only by the hidden, tortured nerves,

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In all their incommunicable pain—
God speaks Himself to us, as mothers speak
With fond, familiar touches, close and dear ;
He gives His angels charge of those who sleep,
But He Himself watches with those who wake.”

At first thought it might seem to us that the Divine Hand could find some gentler way of making its presence known among men, but first thoughts are sometimes false thoughts, and when we realize, as we must, that we ourselves are in one way or another largely responsible for our bodily ills, the aspect is changed. And is it not a great and comforting thought that He watches by us in those dark hours when the very spirit seems stretched on the rack of torture, and the physical being loses semblance to its former self? And do we often suffer wholly in vain? Do we not in the end, when the veil of pain

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has been lifted, and once again we see through calm eyes, come to the realization that there was something which needed refining, something which needed softening, something which shone a little too brightly, something which did not glow warmly enough? It is only through intensest heat that virgin gold can be got and there is much likeness between man and the rough lump of ore which is dug from out the bowels of the earth. In each one of us is some measure of gold. It may be, and often is, hidden beneath a rough covering. Only by the test of fire is the worth of the human being defined. It is easy enough to be a saint when the sea is smooth and the sails round out with a stiff south wind, but the true saint is he who falters not when the

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waves are mountains and the wind has bred a hurricane and the skies darken so that man cannot tell the difference between sea and cloud. That which is built for great use must be given a severer test than it is ever expected to undergo in the course of its existence. The battleship on its trial trip is urged forward as if all the navies of the world were chasing it, and the cylinder which is to be the store-house of motion, and thereby bring into existence speed, is placed at first under abnormal pressure. Thus are things inanimate prepared for their parts. It seems reasonable, therefore, that man, whose part is the highest, should prove his power and ability, especially as to overcoming obstacles, before the fullness of that power and the vastness of that

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ability is placed in his keeping. Pain is the supreme test. He who dares to face an army without tremor of lip or quiver of hand, will pale before one stroke of intense pain. It is indeed the supreme test and often the supreme softener.

I know it is more easy to speak thus when the glow of health is suffused throughout the being than to hold to it when the ruddy cheek has paled and, the canopy of suffering being let down, veils all the world in an ugly dimness. Even then, however, it is not impossible to see some bright ray in the distant prospect. Perhaps if we kept before us more constantly the true measure of life, as expressed in that first line, we might find less to despair of in our bodily afflictions. Perhaps if we could only be made to

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know that in most cases loss means gain—the loss of low, the gain of higher things—we might become more willing to look at it thus. Perhaps, indeed, if we allowed the thought to echo more often through our minds, that only through pain and suffering can our lives in any wise be likened to His who gave us all this heritage, we might be better armed to meet the common conqueror. Pain is the great teacher of patience. Patience is one of the divinest qualities that man can possess—so divine that it serves him as well in things temporal as in things spiritual, fitting in with every phase of existence as if made for that and that alone. So if God's hand weigh heavily, let thine be pressed but the tighter; if God's touch seem to burn the brow, lift thine eyes

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only the higher. Remember it is the fire—the fire that shall some day have burned away—and that the greater the heat the greater the purity of the gold in the residue!

Niagara

SOME days impress themselves upon us as a great light upon the eye; whichever way we look or turn we still see a ball of green, or blue, or purple, which seemingly will not fade. One of these days in my life, and very probably in yours, was that upon which I stood on the brink of the high precipice over which the resistless water of Niagara pour themselves in endless foaming. Within a step of me the wide stream of green and gray rolled smoothly over the crescent edge, as if rushing into the arms of a lover, and bubbling and bursting into white clouds, became a part of the pure and thunderous chaos below. Lost of all semblance to its former self and changed

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in the twinkling of an eye to vast mountains of impenetrable and snowy mist; shattered to infinitesimal bits on the sword-pointed crags beneath, it was spread by the wind like a great veil between earth and sky, and became the canvas on which was painted a rainbow of perfect form and color. Each of the primal colors stood out as if they had come fresh from the palette of God, and the unbroken arch seemed the handle of a big basket filled with a burst of virgin hue. You who have seen it know what it is better than can be told in words. Niagara is one of nature's inexpressibles. Its beauty, its terror, its glory, its swiftness, its absolute power and its perfect simplicity, combine to astound the tongue and set at naught all the boasted powers

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of the imagination. Standing before it, one has somewhat the feeling of being in God's presence, and the thoughtful being is brought as near to that Presence there as any place on earth, perhaps. And Niagara has more than beauty and power and awe. Those rushing waters, those ceaseless thunders are the bearers of a mighty lesson.

Like as they, whirling and swirling, are borne on to that falling-off place, unconscious of the fate that lies before them, unable to turn back when at last they come near to the edge, are many of us carried along in the crowds of life. We are, however, conscious perhaps of the dangers which we glide toward, yet too weak and helpless to set our feet against the stones and thus stay off the hour of

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peril. Like as those waters, we fall in countless cohorts over the edge of some perilous rock, and the thundering echoes of pain and remorse smite all the air. Like as those waters, we are cast against jagged points far below and torn and hurt, but the resemblance does not stop here. There must arise the cloud of mist —a mist of suffering in our own instance, which oftentimes shuts out Heaven more absolutely than that cloud at Niagara ever can. And when that cloud arises there must be the rainbow, for the sun, like the waters, is ever at hand in some spot. And the smiling of its golden face on the cloud of suffering gives us the fairest and most beautiful of the signs of Heaven.

And thus, perhaps, we think as we

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stand enchanted by that tragedy of water how human it all is, how like men and life. There is the calm, smooth journey for those many miles, marred only now and then by some rock easily passed, and in the end that leap into a chasm of apparent despair, whence arises the cloud of weeping and pain and sorrow. But with all of this, ere the thunderous throes are lost, the sun shines out somewhere and there is the rainbow of hope, and the waters of Niagara and the waters of life emerge in troublous company from that vast fall. They still have the Rapids to run, and these are the racking memories of sorrows and losses, and the cruel-seeming days that have been. But the waters of Niagara do not stop there, nor do the waters of life. Growing more and

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more calm, swinging on through that indescribably beautiful gorge, they come at length to the heaven-set village, where they begin to spread and form the peaceful lake. You have stood on those heights, perhaps, with that little church asleep in its grove of tress and those beautiful shores stretching out as if they met the shores of Paradise, and looked far over the fields and fences below to the widening stretch of silver that lay like the personification of peace in the afternoon sun. The rush and the roar is all behind. There is nothing now but a picture of some earthly paradise, the forerunner of one that is not of earth, and all that is left to the memory is the rainbow. And all that stretches out before the spirit is the sweet dream of its eternal promise.

The Trees

THE greatest blessing of nature is a tree. It may seem not only difficult but somewhat unwise to thus single out any one of the many blessings of this vast kingdom wherein we wander and call it the best or the greatest, but the greatest blessing of nature is a tree. Stand on the deck of some ship, with nothing around but water and sky, and still one has food for high thoughts, and still one is conscious of gifts far beyond human meriting. Scale the dizzy heights of the Alps and come at length to a place whence all that can be seen is cloud and snow and sky, and the same is true of that place. Go down into the man-made caverns of earth, and in the

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dim, smoky glare of the lamps gaze at the formation of the walls around and feel the strange, pleasant coolness of the lower air, and almost a new world of wonder and beauty is open to the eyes and the soul of which they are windows. But go out into a treeless country where your only companions are sand and sky, and though you have the sky and its ever-present inspiration, and though you have somewhat the same vastness that surrounded you on the sea, and though there is still something of the strangeness of the lifeless world below, you feel the need of something more, and that is a tree!

Nothing is more beautiful and nothing of such infinite use. When we speak of use as pertaining to trees, the limit of our thought is perhaps houses, moving struc-

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tures of all sorts and kinds, heat which generates the power of earth and gives us light, warmth, force, and provides for us each of the necessities and nine-tenths of the luxuries of living. Vast as is this limit, the scope of the tree's power is even more vast, and one morning we are astounded to read in some government report that the chief reason for the drying up of certain rivers is the destruction of forests; or to be made acquainted with the fact that one of the most vital sources of world-fear lies in the gradual decrease of the number of trees. Thus are we awakened to a consciousness of their high place in nature and brought to a realization of their vast usefulness, not only to man, but to all creatures and all parts of the wide world of vegetation.

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What a world of learning and sentiment is wrapped up in the bark of that old oak which stretches its green arms over the roadway and guards the flowers by the wayside and shelters man from the wrath of the sky! How much of different aspect is interwoven with those tender branches of the yearling which shall yet provide shade and beauty, and even after death leap into life again in some warming flame which, in turn, will live once more in force or fancy. As I look from my window across the green-carpeted valleys and up the tree-hidden hillsides, I feel that the proper attitude in the presence of the trees is a low bending, as to some divine benefactors sent to earth to administer God's goodness. They are indeed, as says the poet, the columns mold-

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ed of God which support the roof of the world and mark its chambers. I contemplate the seas of green that stretch away to the high peaks of dim blue in the distance, fading as they do from the vivid and fresh coloring of the nearby trees into the dimmer tones, and at length shading gently into the hazy color of the mountains, and I feel as if I were looking out over the fields of God, the richest of all, from which the harvest may be taken at any time and which will yield a thousand-fold of beauty and of use. I stretch myself beneath one of those old pioneers of the forest, and my sense of rest and companionship is beyond the power of language to tell. I am in communion with the highest expression of divinity made manifest in the world of na-

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ture. It seems that I suddenly become a part of all that has been and all that is to come, the domain of man has given place to the dominion of the Higher Power, and as I have intercourse with this emissary from the court of Heaven, I hold converse with the brother of all the ages, and draw from him a wisdom greater than man can give.

In the plentitude of trees we are brought close to the fact that nature is not only generous, but wise in her generosity. We have many trees because there is need of many trees. I have known persons who thought we had more than we needed, and who carried their thoughts into action by reducing the visible number. I look upon such as the desecrators of the best that is in nature, and I count

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them but defilers of the temple not built with hands. To use all we have need of is nature's evident wish, but to take one we do not need or do not intend to use is wasting God's gift in a way that cannot, I am sure, be forgiven.

The trees are full of teachings, and these reveal to us many things we need. Chief among them is the exemplifying of the patience with which poverty should be borne. Now poverty is not the burden we count it. More often is it a blessing than a burden. See how often it comes into the life of the tree. When the November days mark the last stage in the short season of the leaves, and one by one those shapes that went to make up the ideal dress fall off and whirl as in a mad dance of death to the grave of the ground,

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the tree neither gasps nor despairs. In patience it waits through the winter. Robbed of all that made it shapely and beautiful, and left a forlorn skeleton standing up alone against gray and dull skies, the silent creature bears in patience, and in hope, mark you, its naked desolation. The day is not far distant when the balm of spring will call forth the young buds, and they in turn be warmed into the young leaves, and then ere long the tree is once again itself and all that which was lost is found, and even in greater measure of beauty. Such a life is not dissimilar to that of him who goes through the winter of desolation patiently and hopefully. Some spring is bound to sound its note of cheer, to send its thrill of warmth once again through the veins.

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Ah! yes, that spring may not be here, but remember this life is only a little garden clustering around the doorstep of the Eternal Home. Whether spring begin ere the spirit cross that threshold, or whether it come with the crossing, there is the same warmth in its first glow and the summer is as bright one way as another, and as warm and as lasting.

Of What is Cast Aside

ONCE on a time I came upon the story of a youth apprenticed to a famous maker of windows in stained glass, over the sea in England. Now this young boy—a likely enough lad at his adopted calling—was much favored of his master, and together, and with much skill, they wrought out the great and small squares and circles and triangles of many-colored glass, through which God's sunlight was let into dim, old cathedrals and ancient abbeys—for the tale was somewhat of the long ago—and men made exceeding much of their labors, and the excellence of their art was borne far and wide in the name, of course, of the master. And it was thus for many years, the lad meantime grow-

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ing more tall in stature and more skilled and tasteful in his work.

Now, as they fitted and leaded the glass from day to day, picturing to-day some pale, sweet-eyed Madonna, to-morrow some valiant, faithful soldier of the Great King, full many a piece of choice hue was cast aside because of its unfitness in shape or color for the space wherein it was to have been set. All of these were thrown carelessly into a ragged pile in one corner of the workroom, and there they lay from year to year like broken bits of a rainbow, beautiful but of no use. As he looked at this ever-increasing mount of color one day, a gleam of the True Light came into the eyes of the apprentice, and that night, when his master was adream, the youth laid him out a

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plan from which to make a window with these discarded pieces. When day smiled in the east he hid his work, but when night came again he went to it, and thus for a long season he wrought, taking but little sleep in the hours of darkness, and by the shaded light of candles making much progress in his work. And all the while his master knew nothing of what he was doing.

At length came the morning when the window was finished, and lo! it was of fairer mold than any which had ever come from out the place, and the light shining through it made it seem as if some of the glory of the spirit land beyond were breaking over that little space of earth. When he saw it thus, the youth was afraid of what his master might say,

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for he knew him to be a man vain-glorious and proud, so he made away with the window to a neighboring town and gave it to the Bishop of the great cathedral there. And it was set above the high altar, and there, if the story be true, it is to this day. But when, as he was bound to, the master at length heard of all this, and had seen the window, he became angry to desperation, and in the hour of rage set upon his helper and killed him. And albeit this tale hath not a glad ending, it is of sweet import to the heart that will listen.

In this vastest of cathedrals—this world of the living—you and I are in a way windows, through which the light of a better day must needs shine, that the long, dark naves and transepts and the endless aisles

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may be robbed of their darkness and made bright with joy and good cheer. And stranger still, we make of ourselves such windows as we are.

Some of us have at hand all that is needed to fit and finish glorious windows, full fair of design and color, and in the eyes of men and in the sight of the Maker of men, these are acceptable. But some others, indeed a very great many, have small supply of the glass and the lead and the other wherewithal to put together their windows, and they look at their own lacks and bewail that they also cannot beautify the temple. For however weak the hands may be, the heart is nearly always willing, yes, anxious to do its part in the sum total of this lower existence.

It is to these sorrowing ones, made

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miserable through what they think of as their lacks, that this quaint tale should mean something. Over in every corner of the world are piles of what has been cast aside by the artist workers at the great tables. In truth there is no place where we cannot find bits of broken glass rejected by the makers of other windows, and there is no one of us who, if he will, cannot take of these rejected pieces and, as the lad of old, cast a window which shall glorify the temple in perhaps even greater measure than those made by him who seems more favored. In the end some such window as this might be the chiefest of all therein. At least we can try, and I tell you that he who gathers the broken bits of each day and chooses therefrom what is beautiful and good, shall yet mold

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that greatest and most beautiful of windows! There must be love in art to make it divine. It is not all to have the hand, the palette, the canvas, the glass, the lead, the solder. There must be behind this the soul which can be transmitted through lifeless things to other souls, and the windows we make for this great cathedral depend far more on the soul we put into them than on the mere materials wherefrom they are constructed. So it is that he who has all this at hand may yet have less of a joy than he who lacks much of what is needed by way of material.

Summer

THE days of dream draw on into the the golden season of summer. The birds voice their matin song before the weary sleeper cares to waken, and their silvery vesper service reaches far into the hours that only a little while since bespoke earth's sleepy time. In the great glow of the triumphant sun, the full-blown roses waft their sweet-scented message through all the world, and everywhere, in everything is spoken, sung and breathed the full splendor of life and bloom and ripening vine and fruitful tree. The fields that were lately shroud-hidden in snow rejoice now in green and gay mantles, broidered as never the hand of woman could trace on cloth with thread

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of gold. The forest that was bare and naked is again rich with life and shade, and nature no longer weeps, save in passionate bursts of joy at her own plenty and her own fruitfulness. The changing year which leads us through its varied seasons brings us nearer and nearer the throne room of its wonderful palace. Like children, straying on from field to field and finding in each some new and greater beauty, we are led from glory to glory, from wonder to wonder, until we stand awed and silent in the presence of marvels beyond the vast limits of imagination. Dreams are as phantoms; joys and hopes even seem surpassed in this wonderful array of flower and fruit, of rushing stream and blooming field!

And this summer, this season of the

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full spirit—how lazily and yet how sweetly its days glide by! How the moon lingers and how the green ocean seems to rise and fall in its ceaseless swell more gently than of late! I suppose if words could be penned in colors instead of letters, if sounds inarticulate could be changed to speech, and in the glow and richness of some lifeless thing we could spell the subject we know, we might from all this riot of hue and fruitfulness, come to know in truth God's definition of peace. There is death in the winter, birth in the spring, peace in the summer day and resignation when the autumn winds blow cheerlessly. Yet it matters not how green and full of bloom are the fields; it matters not how merrily the stream rushes on through the forest or how

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cheerily it bubbles over the rocks, if the heart within does not beat in unison with the great chorus of song around. For weather that's sunny and flowers that are fair, and balm of any kind are nothing to the blind, and the loss of sight in the eyes is but the beginning of blindness. 'Tis when the eyes of the inner being are dimmed that one ceases to see. 'Tis when that half-divine consciousness which is more than half of sight is dulled that the beauties of life are veiled to us. So long as the vision of the spirit is clear, there can be no inward darkness, but let that be clouded, and no human can see far into the glory around or before it. For we see as we feel, and if the heart be heavy the view is limited. Only when all the chords of the being are tuned to the

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true key of infinitude is the horizon of the spirit boundless. Only then do we catch some faint glimpse of what may lie beyond. And there are those who can discern, and easily, some semblance to the white and shimmering towers of endless day. And there are those whose hillside is lost in the hopeless contemplation of the ghosts of last year's mistakes and sorrows.

Along the floor of the forest, where the dead leaves of a year gone still lie damp and rotting, the serpent wends its way, and never lifting eye from the level of the ground, seeks the shade where it is deepest and the swamp where it is most rank. Above in the tree-tops a little bird sings out to the sky as if its throat might truly burst with the melody of gladness; then

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over the green meadow it flies and perches merrily in a nearby tree in an orchard. Should you stoop to the serpent and say to him how glad and gay is the world, he could not believe, because he would not. The glad, gay world means nothing to this crawling thing. Should you tell the bird of a world of damp and dark, it would sing you to scorn. It knows of no such place, because it will not know. And to themselves men and women are serpents or birds. They see as they will. One may choose to crawl through the depths of the forest, another may choose to sit on the high branch of some spreading tree, and the world is to each according to the place chosen wherefrom to view it.

So the summer is a season of exceeding

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joy, not alone because of all its glow and fruitfulness, but because it places before the being so little cause for even the possibility of worry and sorrow and regret. Each season has its joys and to say that one were less sweet than another, or one more to be desired than another, would be speaking for those who would better be allowed their own say. The most plentiful summer may be a season of joy or a period of complaint and discomfort. The changing year, after all, has little to do with it. It merely places the scenery. It is the heart that makes the play!

The Peace of God

THE peace of God which passeth all understanding."

You have perhaps heard these words resound in gentle cadence through vaulted aisles, falling upon the bowed heads of the people like snow-flakes of benediction. In the noblest ritual yet composed of man their place is high, and among the noblest of God's creations it should be higher still. Pause a moment over their meaning. The peace of God—the eternal quietude of the spirit; the unending restfulness of that inner part of the being which is not bound by mortal limits. It is the peace of God whereby we are led to a safe refuge from the world's unrest; whither we may turn and never seek comfort in vain. How many a weary soul,

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worn and tired with its struggle, has sought out that haven when the shadows fall at eventide and found there a joy which only they who have known can appreciate. How many, many thousands have passed and are passing to-day that frequent seat beside the road of life, not knowing or seeing, but going on to the end of the long way, with only sighs and hard-drawn prayers. One step from the path and they would find that which is more constant than the sun, more full of love for man than nature itself, more plenteous than the air—for such is the peace of God.

Does it not seem worth while, even to the mind of practical turn, to strive somewhat for this, despite the business and strenuousness of these later days? And then,

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close following, comes the question which one often hears asked : "Is anything worth while that does not repay in some visible or tangible reward?" I think some things are. I believe that when one has striven as long and as earnestly for the spiritual and the invisible as for the material and tangible, the measureless worth of these higher things becomes as eminently visible as the highest rangs of mountains or the most vivid flash of lightning. Who can see love, yet who would be so foolish as to say it was not the strongest, most potent, most powerful and most general of forces. Who can put away peace as things of matter are stored up, yet who will deny that of all personal or national possessions this is, next to love, and almost in the same measure, the most to be desired?

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We are put in this world, I believe, for some purpose beyond suffering, toiling, tiring, sighing, weeping. These gray and dull things have their place in life as the clouds have their place in the sky and the mists and fogs on land and sea. The time was when to my mind the thought of fog contained no possible source of good or blessing. The idea of drifting on the broad surface of the sea, not knowing whither or whence, nor what rock or hulk or bar might suddenly sound the death signal, was one bereft of all hope, so far as I could see. But having been thus surrounded once, and having felt as I did, man's utter helplessness and God's absolute power, I can no longer think of even the fog at sea as a hopeless thing. The words of the Cardinal's divine hymn

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have taken on a new meaning; the feeling that the Great Pilot is at the helm, and with His own hands is guiding whither He would the ship should go, is not barren of comfort nor of peace.

Few, comparatively, may climb the steeps of material success; fewer gain the heights thereof. But to every living being is the possibility of peace—this peace that passeth all understanding. Suppose this day does not bring what we wished and prayed it should, what of that? Are there not to be other days, and does not each day bring us somewhat more than we deserve perhaps, or more even than we desired? Suppose we are for a time harassed and encumbered by our own failings and weaknesses, what of this? Have we not always before us, well within our

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grasp, if we will reach out for it, the hope of at least some semblance to the eternal quietude of God's peace? What if one single day did bring us all we had hoped and prayed for—left no desire unfulfilled, no longing unsatisfied, no wish fruitless, what would life hold for us then? It is in the endless succession of new desires, new hopes, new prayers and new needs that we realize the great ends of living. We take no step, however great, but some step higher appears before us; we reach no goal, it matters not how high, but a higher one rises in the distance, beckoning us on with all the allurements that helped us to the one already gained. It is all so human and withal so divine. It is the undeniable proof of eternity, of immortality. And as we go on from step

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to step, from goal to goal, we shall find each day easier and brighter if we set apart some portion of it for the calm and quiet contemplation of the really high things, the things that are not of the hour or the year, or the century, but of the everlasting. The hands will be better able to do their work; the heart stronger in hope, greater in courage; the spirit more ready to accept what comes, more willing to give what seems needed, if day by day we rest a little while in this arbor by the roadside, this vine-clad arbor wherein is the soft light of the “peace of God which passeth all understanding.”

The Worth of Service

NOW it chanced not long since that there fell into my hands a very beautiful little book, wherein was printed a tale of similar account, being the story of a certain minstrel, back in the days when minstrels roamed from place to place, ekeing out a living with their songs and stories. And this minstrel, who formed a very small human part of the Twelfth century, grew a-weary of the world, and in order that he might find rest and peace, joined himself to an holy order. Having done this, he became despondent over his lack of ability to do as his brethren in the giving of praise and labor for his shelter and keep. Being but a minstrel, he had never

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learned aught but to sing and dance and tumble, at which last-named art he was a master indeed, and so he felt greatly out of place among these goodly men of God, and bethought him what he might do to show his appreciation of the food and lodgment given him. And it came to pass after certain days that he discovered an obscure crypt in the monastery wherein was an altar covered with dust from disuse, and above it a likeness of the Lady Mary. Then of a sudden did an idea lay hold of him, and since he was better at tumbling than at aught else he did here, before the likeness of the Lady Mary above the altar, many of his most difficult feats, all in the true and humble spirit of adoration. Thus daily did he perform his devotions for many days, until at

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length one of his brothers caught sight of him making antics before the altar and took report of him to the abbot. But the abbot refused to take action until he himself had seen the minstrel, so he betook himself in secret to the crypt and there did see the strange antics and difficult feats performed before the altar, with the likeness of the Lady Mary above. And when the minstrel had done with them all, and was resting with great drops of water coursing down his cheek, and half-exhausted leaned against the wall, the abbot himself did see a vision as of the Lady Mary coming down from the frame and ministering to the poor tired man, and with her were many angels doing service upon her. And the abbot was much impressed, and he bade the brethren that

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they take no offence at the tumbling, for it was done in the true spirit of adoration and devotion, and besides it was the best the minstrel could do. So it was that when a few years had passed, and Death in his endless round tapped on the door of the minstrel's cell, the abbot and many a monk were there, and as the stranger, long since grown thin with his tumbling before the little altar, closed his eyes for the last time upon the scenes of this world, they all did see the vision of the Lady Mary, and of the many angels doing service upon her, and they all did see how she bade the angels carry the minstrel's soul to Heaven. And there ended the quaint tale.

Yet a good tale hath no ending, for when it has been of worth to one, it goeth

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on to help or gladden another, even as this one came to me, and even as we may carry its meaning into our daily lives and gain therefrom full much of peace and help and comfort. For was not the minstrel you, perhaps, and was not the dim crypt this world, perchance, and do we not as we journey back and forth often feel our own inability to do as others, and are we not sometimes overcome by this lack, as it seems to exist in our sight? Yet have not you and I one thing which we can do well above all others? It matters not what that thing be, for He to whom all service is due hath no need of one thing above another. It is the spirit in which we act, not the deed itself, that counts. And if we do that one thing as well as we can, think you we shall be

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scorned or set at naught for our sincerity and our effort?

The true beauty of service consists not in what we do, but in how we do it. The worth of service lies not in the means, but in the manner of expression. If only we would let this truth come more closely into our lives; if only we would acknowledge to ourselves that no matter how little we are capable of doing, so long as we do our very best, and in the fullest measure, never stinting, it is bound to be acceptable to the High Power, even if the lower ones do spurn and frown at us, there might be many a heartache saved. We might find hands more real than those which came to serve the weary minstrel stretched out to minister unto us.

The Joy of Death

WHEN the reaper goes out into the field of gold in the golden days summer and sweeps down the ripened stalks, leaving behind him only a stretch of stubble, do we grieve for the grain that bows to his stroke? Do we not rather rejoice that there shall be an abundance of bread in the world? When the caressing twilight loses itself in the shadows of night, and but for some far away star, the heavens were lost to us, do we bemoan the parting day? Look we not rather to another hour of dawn, which shall bring back to us all these joys of light a little while lost? The fading flower, the falling leaf, the dying year—these speak to us of new and greater beauty. Their hue of sorrow is lost in the

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surety of hope. But when death enters where we sit, and leaving, walks with one we loved, how is it then? Then we are too blind with weeping to see the bread in the ghost of the fallen wheat; the morning hid in the shade of night; the new beauty born of the passing away of flower and leaf. Is there hope in the field and garden, and not in the heart of man? Is he who has the Master's promise of immortality to be overcome by the separation of what is only an hour, when we dwell upon eternity?

We are not yet wholly free. The slavery of the ages still casts its bonds about us, and the old ideas come down from days remote still cage us in to some extent. We are free to believe, but we fear to trust too greatly. No day but what we

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hear the old falsehood—you cannot trust men. You cannot—not until you trust implicitly the God of men. Then may your faith in humanity be as the dust scattered to the utmost ends of land by heaven's four-winged force. And having come into this full freedom of trusting God, and knowing that what He decrees is for the good of His children, how can death smite us as some unconquerable sorrow? Indeed the face we loved is gone, and naught remains but a ribbon she wore against her white throat, or a book he loved and in it marked his love. But for all that has been taken, much is given that was not ours before. Now Heaven is not some dream of fancy, far away beyond the senses, beyond the flight of the swift-sped spirit, even. Only a

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little bridge of years spans the stream which flows silently between the lands of this life and those of that Life. And do we doubt the shores that fringe the waters on the other side, when one there is with whom we would have spoken so long and dearly, who was led away almost before we knew him, knew her? Are they not now a reality, whose outlines seem hidden only behind some loose hung misty veil, which will not be hard to pierce when the eyes are strong? Know we not that what was once our dream is now our assurance? Is that which thus leads us on among the stars so vast a wrong, so inconsolable a loss?

Indeed 'tis gain—this knock which wakes the soul
To surer sight of what the future holds ;
To closer walks with those sweet saints who stand
To welcome us some day.

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Shall we fear this? We should neither fear it nor long for it. It is not wise to fear what we cannot control. We should respect death, viewing it as the ending of a faulty and the beginning of a faultless existence, as the finale of time and the opening measures of the prelude to eternity. And when the hour decreed has passed, and one of the loves of our hearts has been transferred to another realm, have we not that love still only in a higher and more beautiful form?

There should be some joy in the thought that somewhere beyond the clouds and stars is the soul of a friend or lover. We should be happier in the knowledge that all our ties are not mortal, even during the period of our mortality. It should add something to each

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day's fullness to feel that to some we love, all we do and say is as an open book. When our time comes to say good-bye, when our own skies are streaked with the red and gold of the sunset hour, and we set sail in the night to be landed on brighter shores with the breaking of another dawn, it should lessen the sadness of parting to look forward to meeting those who have gone on before. We go then to no land of strangers. And so it seems to be, for there shines from out every dead face some sign of peace.

The Art of Living

ONE art there is among men which stands out above all others as the Himalayas rise above the mountains of earth. Beside it—to the eye which is truly the window of the soul—all acquisitions of talent, wealth and genius appear as mere servants. We rejoice in the arts and sciences which ennable and uplift us, and we house their product of treasure in vast walls of stone, and adorn their executors with medals of honor and the like, and sound forth their names throughout the nations. This is well, for thus do we encourage and bestir to even higher achievement the handservants of the mightiest art—the Art of Living. And what house is, in truth, a tribute to

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its master if it be not well served, or what ship a credit to its captain if not well manned?

The Art of Living—how many of the throng that daily sets forth to labor with the sun, stop to think of themselves as artists. If only they could know and feel what artists they are!—working away, unconsciously but everlastingly, at the greatest canvas ever stretched—the canvas of Life! It seems strange that men and women should not more freely recognize this as the prime art, and yet the reason is not deep-hidden. Only when we come in contact with something new or novel or of vast dimensions do we thrill within. The ordinary run of things—the common events of yesterday and to-day, the flowers which blossom in

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endless profusion and the stars which shine in countless hosts—these are so well known to us that we seldom stop to consider their wonder and beauty and their immense power. Because all this has been the privilege of ages past, and differs not greatly now from what it was in the days of the Prophets, or the Roman era, or the Protectorate, it has become largely a matter of habit to accept it as something quite incidental to the years of humanity. How great is such a mistake we can never fully appreciate until some day there comes to us a realization of the splendor and freshness of dawn, or the marvelous working of the human frame or some such example of the Creator's genius. Then is life lighted up in our eyes! Then we see good and beauty in

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what before seemed dull and unlovely—forgetting that experience changes little from century to century, accepting all that comes with the enthusiasm and frank gratitude of a young girl when first she trips out into the world of her mother's friends. Now is life something to stifle the imagination and put the sense to riot; a thing to conjure with; a force unspeakable; a power beyond which the human intelligence can conceive but one greater or more divine.

Day sings to the heart a song of doing and pushing forward; night chants a melody of rest and sweet repose. Sleep is more loved and even more welcome than of yore, since it is the cordial which shall make more keen the senses to appreciate what is beautiful and strange, mar-

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velous and intricate. Breathing becomes a pleasure, thinking a joy. To work with colors of heart and soul upon a canvas of eternity, with years for brushes and the whole world for a palette; to carve from living stone the statues of the future—ah! this is some partnership with a Hand Divine. By this are we lifted from out the common round and carried to the companionship of higher beings. This is the vital art—the art with speech and sight and feeling. This is the secret of joy, the key to happiness!

There is no lull in the painting of the great picture. To each is given some part. I may have to deal with the clouds, you with the trees, yon being with the sunny skies; but only joy can guide the hand that feels itself carrying out the will

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of the Master. The colors of some are dull, of others glowing; but even this marks no cause for regret—since they who dip into tubes of gray know full well how much more they are adding to the bright colors in the foreground. There is no lull, I say. For each painter who lays down his brush with the dusk comes another with the dawn who lifts that brush to even better purpose, perhaps. For each who hands his palette back to the Master comes a new claimant—and the palette, rich with fresh colors and 'reft of its rough, scarred surface, becomes a new factor in the mosaic of the ages.

They sing while they work away at this picture—these lovers of life. And as one voice drops out from time to time, a new one is lifted in its stead. The eyes that

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close in this spot are opened wider in another. The hand that falters here is made strong and steady somewhere on beyond. While we work away here we see only that little part allotted to our skill. When we have done our duty, howsoever small it may have been, we stand where all of it is visible. Then we know how we could work with such heart and spirit, despite dull days and weary-seeming nights. Then we know what here we only dreamed. It is well for us to dream. The best parts of that unending painting are the dreams that live upon it in color and in form beyond all others.

Beyond the mountain tops, beyond the stars, there is one art more high. But here we reach the height of life's possibilities when we realize the art of living.

To A Face

B^{EFORE} me, on my desk, is a face. From out a narrow casement of gold two eyes of which I have no words to tell, keep watch of every word I write. When I look away from the jagged line of my pen, it is to dwell upon the curving beauty of two dear lips, whence come the sweetest notes of music that surround my way; a throat as soft and song-filled as that of the wee brown bird which sings me gladness from a twig outside my window each morning; a crown of dark hue—in the picture—but of a golden saint-like glory in the living. I would the power were mine to tell you what it all means to me—for I would make you sharer of my deepest joy if I could. If I

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could borrow from the sun the secret of its cheery smile, from the south wind its softness, from the rainbow its celestial beauty, from the sea its wonder and from the high hills their majesty, and put these down upon a piece of the blue sky above, with shooting stars for commas and planets for periods, I might be able then to tell you all that face means to me. But—all I can say is: Before me, on my desk, is a face!

No, there is something more. Before me, in my life, is a face. By its dear, steady light, always more bright to-day than yesterday, I am enabled to see—even though they be veiled in the haze of distance—some of the things I long sought and prayed for, and with them, some beyond my fairest dreams and hoping. As

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I look in upon those visioned realms, all gilt with this great light, my heart forgets the rough places along the road and the thorns and stones that boded me ill comfort once, seem all to have been swept from my path. All the bare trees of winter seem suddenly transformed into full and shadowy leafage, and even the brownest of meadows is as it were the early summer—green-spread and broidered thick with flowers. I see them yet as they are, bare and brown, but I cannot know them thus. For somehow, strangely, in the shining of that face is hid a power to change all things and make them new and different in my eyes. Were I a Moore or a Burns, I might make songs whose words would speak all that is mine in this sweet face, and let you

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know how that calm light gladdens and glorifies all on which its constant beam is shed. But my mute lyre must still be mute—I have not power to make it speak. And all my pen will spell is: Before me, in life, is a face!

Not all—there still is something I can say. Before me, in my heaven, is a face. It is the same one, only more fair. Because of it my heaven has left its high seat in the future and come down to me now and here. It is no longer some imagined realm, that sits in endless sun along the farther shores of the ether ocean. Long since the gate to its outer garden was opened by a dainty hand, all white and touched with pink—and that's how came the light, I ween. And in that garden whence the hand has led I look, with

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heart aflame with prayer, on flowers I had never thought to more than dream of, and list to music that I once dreamed only angels heard.

It may be God shall some day set in His vast kingdom of the sky a new star and give me that for the face I now have and love and am lighted by. Sometimes I wonder why He has thus long been good to me—with all my human erring. And if that be His will, how can I murmur? One glimpse of such a light has brought me to heaven; one thought would lead me to the inner gate.

Before you, in your life, God grant some face. The light that shines through loving eyes is more than sun or white cloud's casting. The melody that floats from loving lips is better than the music

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of the winds among the pines. And when we come to inspiration, help, comfort, joy —ah! where's the tongue that can half tell the story! There are no words for some of the things that come into life. The stars and the sea tell of them somewhat, and what they lack is made up in the silence of the heart. You understand, perhaps. If not, my prayer is that you may. For you are human, as I am, and life can only be good so long as before me, on my desk, in my life, and in my heaven, is that face!

Music

LOOK on music as God's speech with man. I count its rythm the echoing of His tread through heaven's ethereal halls, its harmony the shadow of God's justice; its melody the sign of His deep love. Of all earth's tongues it is alone the one which is understood of every human soul. Clime, circumstance and character may vary, and yet this voice has everywhere a meaning to the heart. Age marks no change. As the child's face glows with joy at the twittering of a bird, so the white-crowned cheeks of life's sunset side break into smiles of peace at the sound of a note which marks some unforgotten day. Through all the changes and viscissitudes of mortality

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flows the stream of music—now helping men to a full realization of intense joy, now soothing them in sorrow or comforting them in loss. It alone seems to have place in this world and the next without need of change. No thought of a life to come was ever unaccompanied by a sense of the song of angels, or a celestial melody of harps. Of all that comes to us in this mortal state, it is the only thing wholly pure.

Men and music have souls—souls that dwell in a kinship close to an ideal Motherhood. When the heart would utter its deepest, noblest thoughts; when the soul would have speech, they seek alike some silvern note or chord of gold. When love sighs, the echo is a strain of sweet sound, and when hope rises, the light it

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casts comes in the voice of song. The world rolls on among its fellow spheres through cloud and shine—men's hearts dance gaily or drag wearily, and ever comes to him who listens some song of home, or love or hope or death. It is the mantle which makes all things sweet to look upon. The lips forever sealed speak some message of ineffable sweetness through the deep and slow-measured dirging of the organ; the hands forever joined are closer bound together by swaying strains of bliss. When man reaches the outer limit of speech in words and signs, and can no longer express his feelings through these ancient methods, God sends him music, and in it can be said all that the being would but could not speak. Whether its measures fall on barren ears,

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or those made rich by all that the world and life at its full tide can give, its meaning is the same.

It is the most universal of blessings, and the one least often counted among our blessings, I think. So general is its part in life and so seldom lacking, that we fall into the unlovely habit of taking it more or less for granted. What if we stopped and breathed a word of prayer in thanksgiving for every note of music that came to our ears! Life would be little less than one long prayer, would it not?

Some army, worn with long and weary marching and beset by hunger and sleeplessness, trial and danger—unfit apparently for aught but rest and nursing, is fired into a mass of indomitable power at the sound of a battle hymn, rough-played, or

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the husky call of the drums aft. Some solitary wanderer, without a place to call home or a person to call friend, more ready for death than for another day, has borne to his ears a simple melody of times remote, and all his quickened being speaks of hope renewed and courage raised again. The restless child is calmed to sleep by a lullaby from loving lips; the care-worn man, his head heavy with the day's doings, is soothed into peace by the strains of a voice soft-strung in pearls of song familiar. The laborer hums him airs of native land and half forgets he labors; the tubwoman plys her arms to the rhythm of folk song, and is once more a girl, full of the joy of life. The voice of love must be a song; the voice of faith a hymn; the voice of thanksgiving a Te

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Deum. Literature, painting and all the kindred arts can only hope for place in lives made ready for them; music is a welcome guest in every home of human soul.

This world revolves in one unending melody of voice and string and reed and brass and woodwind. There is never a moment, night or day, when somewhere in earth's stretch of land and sea, hearts glad and souls sad are not voicing themselves in music. It is the vast chorus of the universe—the echo of that burst of love from those first morning stars that blinked at Eden's groves; of that glad melody of angels' making when Bethlehem became the cradle of human love. O let us greateren that chorus! With lives more fitly scored to all that dwells in

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music's realm; with hearts more bent upon the gladdening of these fields terrestrial, wherein we wander now; with souls more in tune with the Infinite Soul, let us never hesitate to add to this undying song, our little measure of voice. We can go singing through life or sighing. The sighing can make no one of us happier or better; the singing can. Let us then go singing, that while here we may the better swell the harmony of mortality, and when There we may be the better prepared for the endless song of life immortal.

“Crossing the Bar”

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me !
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark !
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have cross'd the bar.

SOME poems are like souls. Once known, they are forever ours. The changes of time, the varyings of clime and circumstance, cannot rob us of their wondrous beauty or their comfort.

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We may not be able to recall word for word the stanzas, just as we are not always able to remember when or where we chanced upon a certain soul, yet the scene is set in our hearts, and like the memories called up by yellowed letters, folded and put away, or the faint scent of faded rose leaves, we have in them the personality of the writer or the odor of the full blown flower. Some poems have souls, and this is one of them.

It almost seems to me when I go over these sweet stanzas in my mind, as if the soul which guided the pen that made these marks saw afar the confines of the Eternal Harbor, and had visual access to more than is often granted man to see. It is a great thought, the peace of the ships whose sails are furled forever. Out of

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the dust of the day's desires, like some soft-whispered vesper benediction, it appears as a messenger of some new joy. For over and above the lesser fears of our lives stands ever the menacing spectre of the fear of death; the ever present ghost of that which you and I must meet some day. So like a gentle hand laid in ours in a moment of need, come the words of the poet, himself standing on the last shore of this little day and patiently waiting the coming of the ship that never returns, which was to bear him Home.

“Turns again home.”

Through all the strife and care of daily living, how these words lift us up to better things! How gladly at the close of each twelve hours of labor and thought and responsibility, the tired mortal takes

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up the way that will lead him to his own! His heart blooms anew with the thought of a little peace and a little surcease from the day's work. I think the hurrying crowds that fill the city streets at night-fall bear one of the best of messages to the eyes and ears of man. Despite the day's task and the impress it has left on faces and the lightness it has lifted from steps, the thought of the evening, even though it be not one of complete rest, is so good as to fill the very air with a cheerful spirit. They are going to their own, however humble that be, and though their destinations vary almost as the sands on the seashore, the look in their eyes and the feeling in their hearts are one. To each his own is best, and to each the coming again to his own has a meaning almost

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great enough to cover up all with which the day has been fraught.

It should be thus at the close of life's day. As we turn from the work of this world which has tired us and given us anxious moments and long hours of wearing responsibility—for life has all of these, and he who would live it in its fullness must not look for less—we should face the home-going with that same glad step and that same cheerful look in the eyes. For is not that place whither we are bound the greatest of homes? Oh! let us be wise as the poet is. The tide which comes in must go out that it may return again. The years lent us here are not to be handed back to the Maker in coin or in kind. The cargo which the Pilot looks for from his light-house in

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the sky is just a soul. He seeks a soul refreshed by contact with the best things He has planted here below—made to broaden as the blue sky broadens and to deepen as does the green sea. He does not ask achievement or rank or power of human mold. Above all these things He is possessed of a creative genius which turns them into matters of no moment whatever. The ship which goes back to Him after its little stay on these shores of time must be cleared of its material cargo. As its white sails sway into the ether of eternity, as its prow ploughs a way through the myriads of stars, all that He seeks is the light at the helm—the soul. As the tide returns with its burden to the shores whence it came, He only looks to see if what He lent has been well

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used. His Heaven hath ever need of stars, and they who here shine in truth and love and goodness are they who there shall be the great lights of the stormless harbor.

Ambition

AMBITION is the tonic of the gods if rightly used; the poison of the devils if wrongly taken. By it have come the best things we have; through it our greatest losses have been suffered. It is the nectar which invigorates to a certain draught, and when that draught is taken, it becomes the drink which turns men into demons and lowers the purpose of their lives and leaves the world a victim to their greed. It is the road which leads to fame and honor if we but turn aright where it forks, but if at the sign-post we choose the path that wrongly leads, it is but a marshy, dangerous descent to death. Of life and what is possible to life, it is the salt, and duly

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sprinkled it well flavors all, but stir in just one pinch too much, and it becomes a bitterness that plagues our food and us. No tool the hand can wield, no power of brain, no might of mind, no towering height of thought can be well used without ambition's aid; yet if we force the hand, the mind, the soul, and overwhip them with ambition's lash, the human steeds are lost to our control and, pushing madly, blindly through the world, they wreck themselves and what they draw upon the crags of time. Look through the years and see how many men whose whole beings seemed to pulse with great desires, who, seeming to feel the needs of men, sought to make themselves the servants of these lacks and yet who overreached the mark by putting themselves

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before the end that they would gain. And look again—see, too, how many men rich in accomplishments that breed true success have found in this determination to overcome all, the pathway to the final attainment of their goals. Without ambition man is only clay, but with too much man is a thing of stone.

The chiefest point about ambition is that which we aim at. The end does not of necessity justify the means, but in every instance the means should be justified by the end. Therefore, to him who entering life, would triumph in some cause which from within he feels to be of worth to men and help to the future, chooses the righteous end and holds that alone in view, never allowing personal gain or position to over influence his thoughts

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and deeds, ambition stands arrayed in her best garb and is the servant of his every mood, and serves him nobler than can any other guide save faith. But it is most difficult in this world, surrounded as we are by luxuries which constantly lure us on, and almost bred to desires of evil sort arrayed in silk, to well divine the limits of ambition. As a rule, when we speak of one as being ambitious the thought inferred is wealth. It should not be so. Ambition of the finer sort is a burning to do and to help, not to gain; and to have ambition of the nobler mold is to be something, and that something Good! Greatness follows as surely in this course as water flows down a hillside. The men whose names resound with honor, even though centuries separate

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our times from theirs, are those who wrought with high purpose and unceasing energy for things of good.

They are the Great who served the Good,
Who saw in life some nobler part
Than striving after things of gain
Which gathered here must be here left
At Death's inevitable call.

They are the Great who, looking forth,
See somewhere in the realms beyond
This cavalcade of sense and sight,
The ends that God has wisely planned,
And strive to add some human note
To this divinest symphony.

The spirit that takes up this task, forgetting self and all that breeds self comfort and self satisfaction here, and marches on through stir and strife, seeing naught but the light and cleaving to that light as one cleaves when a child to a Mother's breast, with high purpose and thoughts aflame with great desires—that

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spirit stands in this or any age the statue of immortal man. Life is at best a dance of deeds, wherein some choice to us is given of whom we dance with and of where, and he who best keeps time to those immortal melodies of yore; he who best heeds the word of God, the needs of man, is he who molds ambition's power into a form whose feet touch earth; whose hands are held aloft to Heaven.

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